LA FOI ET LES MŒURS

or

FAITH AND MORALS

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

SYED HUSSEIN ALATAS

Religion and Modernization in Southeast Asia

THE relation between religion and modernization in Southeast Asia is a theme of such a complex nature that a discussion of any of its various aspects would necessitate a preliminary methodological and conceptual clarification. Such a clarification is further necessitated by the fact that modernization as a historical and contemporary phenomenon has been treated by scholars from different disciplines using concepts as political modernization, economic modernization, technological modernization, military modernization, educational modernization, administrative modernization, and so forth. It becomes almost the general practice to employ the concept modernization in a diffused and ambiguous manner. The ambiguity and diffuseness of the concept lies in the fact that no distinction or differentiation is accomplished between the numerous phenomena. This has resulted in the following:

(1) *The identification of modernization with different types of social change.* Various types of social change were regarded as modernization, some of which were the conditions and effects of modernization, rather than the essential process as such (1).

(2) *The identification of modernization with Westernization, implicitly or explicitly.* A clear instance of explicit identification is Toynbee's conception of modernization (2). Chitoshi Yanaga, a historian

(1) Based on several researches on modernizations, J. W. Hall summarized at least 32 characteristic features of modernization from the political, social, economic and intellectual spheres, as part of his attempt to define modernization. Notwithstanding its usefulness and comprehensiveness, yet in a few instances, he failed to distinguish between the essential process of modernization and some of its effects. The weakening of religious and cultural dogmas is one of the suggested characteristics which is in reality only an effect relative to time and place. See J. W. HALL, *Changing Conceptions of the Modernization of Japan, in* M.B. JANSEN, *Changing Attitudes toward Modernization* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1965).

(2) A. J. TOYNBEE, *The Present Day Experiment in Western Civilization* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962) : "Today the whole world is bent on being modern; but this agreeable word 'modern' is a euphemism. It is a substitute for the less agreeable word 'Western" [p. 24.] The motive for using the word modern instead of Western

Arch. europ. sociol., XI (1970), 265-296.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of modern Japan lumped the concepts modernization and Westernization together evidently induced by the historical instances he dealt with, in a chapter called "Acceleration of Modernization and Westernization" (3).

(3) *The identification of modernization with the constitutional and democratic form of government based on the Western European model.* An implicit identification is clearly shown by Eisenstadt when he considered the failures of constitutional democracy in Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma and the Sudan as "breakdown in modernization". He regarded the attempts of Nazism as "demodernization", the rise of militarism in modern Japan as a "breakdown" (4). It is obvious that his concept of modernization is somewhat narrow and misses the essential nature of the process.

(4) *The emphasis on a particular aspect or process of modern society as the essential core of modernization.* Here too there is an implicit identification with the Western model. The industrial and capitalistic aspects of Western society are then considered as the basic ingredients of modernization.

(5) The confusion of the term modernization with the process of arriving at modernity, that is, pertaining to the modern world. In this sense anything novel created at the present time is modern, like modern ball room dancing, modern fashion, modern music, modern art, modern individualism, modern family, etc. Here too the model is usually Western society.

In view of the prevailing ambiguity of the term modernization the following definition is suggested to be used within the context of this paper. *Modernization is the process by which modern scientific knowledge covering all aspects of human life is introduced at varying degree, first in the Western civilization, and later diffused to the non Western world, by different methods and groups with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better and more satisfactory life in the broadest sense of the term, as accepted by the society concerned.* The traits of modern scientific knowledge are the following:

(*a*) The objectification of nature; (*b*) The assumption of laws and regularities in nature explainable in terms of a rational and empirical approach divorced from magic, religious dogma and philosophical

for the introduction of science and democracy is merely to save face for "it goes against the grain to admit that one's own ancestral way of life is not adequate to the situation in which one now finds oneself" [*loc. cit.*]

(3) Chotoshi YANAGA, *Japan since Perry* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1949).

(4) S. N. EISENSTADT, Breakdowns of Modernizations, *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* XII (1964), 345-367.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

systems; (*c*) The recourse to experimentation to assess the validity of suggested explanations; (*d*) The use of signs and abstract concepts; (*e*) The maintenance of a critical and enquiring spirit; (*f*) The search for truth for its own sake (5); (*g*) The employment of and concern for definite methods; (*h*) The use and discovery of inanimate energy for further developments.

The characteristics of modernization listed by several scholars are ultimately dominated by one basic process. The development and application of modern science. Industrialization is after all the accomplishment of modern science based on the use of inanimate power and innumerable invention. The banking system, double entry book-keeping and the transaction of modern business, are all the results of scientific inventions. They are the application of modern science to human affairs (6).

The sets of criteria to classify modernization will depend on the foci of interest (7). We can then have modernization of the constitutional democratic type, of the totalitarian type, of the autocratic type, etc. Similarly, we can classify modernization with reference to other foci of interest in all fields of human endeavour. One instance which may be viewed in terms of modernization, is the modernization

(5) These traits are each subject to further elaboration. We have, however, to stress that only recourse to actual concrete historical instances can express adequately what is meant by modern science. It should involve the entire corpus of knowledge related to modern science and its origin in Western Europe from at least the XVIIth century. Only then will the differentiating traits between modern science and its precursors be made clear. The invention of the steam engine, the discovery of electricity, the microscope, and a host of other things are specifically unique traits of modern science and technology.

(6) Rustow and Ward have hinted at the possibility that the central aspect of modernization as a historical phenomenon is man's rapidly increasing control of the forces of nature. See D. A. RUSTOW, R. E. WARD (eds.), *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 4. The following is their view of modernization: "Modernization as a historical concept includes such specific aspects of change as industrialization of the economy or secularization of ideas, but it is not limited to these. It involves a marked increase in geographic and social mobility, a spread of secular, scientific, and technical education, a transition from ascribed to achieved status, an increase in material standards of living and many related and subsidiary phenomena. Rough numerical measures of modernization are provided, in our century, by the ratio of inanimate to animate energy used in the economy, the proportion of the working force employed in secondary and tertiary rather than primary production (that is, in manufacturing and services, as opposed to agriculture and fishing), the degree of urbanization, the extent of literacy, the circulation of mass media, the gross national product per capita, and the length of life expectancy at birth" [pp. 3-4.]

(7) Norman JACOBS, in his *The Origin of Modern Capitalism and Eastern Asia* (Hong-Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1958), suggested that Japan and Western Europe belong to the same basic type of modern capitalism while India and China to another. The criteria of classification are certain historical and structural factors facilitating the rise of modern capitalism in Japan and Western Europe at the period of take-off.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of feudalism. Unfortunately there is no surviving modernized feudal society that could serve as our instance. But we can point to historical instances of such modernization. The feudal society of the Tokugawa period in Japan did attempt some modernization in certain sectors conceived as significant by the then ruling power. Plans for military reforms were drawn up in 1862 by the Tokugawa Shogunate, though the achievement was not impressive. Modernization of the army and navy developed rapidly at the end of the Tokugawa period under the impact of foreign countries (8). Interest in Western learning was shown by the Tokugawa Shogun Yoshimune (1716-1745), who was fond of astronomy. The first frictional electric machine was brought by the Dutch in 1770 and was soon imitated and multiplied. In 1823, a German physician, von Siebold, attached to a Dutch merchant ship trained many Japanese in the medical profession (9). With the overthrow of the Tokugawa Regime after the Restoration of 1868, the break with the feudal past was by no means complete despite several changes in the social, economic, political and educational fields. The political order of Japanese society, based on the sacral absolutism of the Emperor, may be viewed as the modernized version of feudalism, wherein science, industry and technology, together with the social structural adjustments, were made to serve the needs and privileges of the ruling group whose basic values were derived from the feudal past (10).

The second consequence derived from our conception of modernization is the need to distinguish it from Westernization. Though it is true that the basic ingredients of modernization are derived from the West, nevertheless it is possible to consider them as autonomous cultural elements which are subject to diffusion without necessarily being accompanied by Western culture. If they are, the reasons are to be sought elsewhere rather than in the intrinsic nature of the process of modernization. We are compelled by the nature of cultural diffusion to make this distinction. In the case of the history of Europe this distinction has never been questioned. When Europe adopted many technological, scientific, philosophical and material elements of the Islamic civilization during the Middle Ages, this

(8) Fukushima SHINGA, The Building of a National Army, *The Developing Economies*, III (1965), *special issue:* The Modernization of Japan, pp. 520-521. In the eyes of the author feudal restrictions prevented the successful completion of the modernization process in the Tokugawa period.

(9) Ayao KUWAKI, Development of the Study of Science in Japan, *in* Inazo NITOBE, *Western Influence in Modern Japan* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1931).

(10) For other significant aspects see Munakata SEIYA, The Course and Problems of National Education, in *The Developing Economies*, *op. cit.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

adoption has never been characterized as Islamization or Arabicization, and rightly so. The adoption of those elements were not accompanied by a wholesale introduction of Islamic customs, morals, philosophy, rituals, rites of passage, values, habits, etc., though in certain areas like Spain and Sicily there were considerable Arabic Islamic influence accompanying the diffusion of science and technology (11).

The third consequence from our conception of modernization is that although modernization can refer to numerous phenomena not everything can be modernized and some such things are magic, and certain forms of religion. Any attempt to introduce modern science and technology into their spheres of activities would lead to their dissolution. On the surface the inclusion of scientific elements into their activities may give the impression of modernization but in reality this is not the case (12).

The fourth consequence from our conception of modernization is to distinguish its effects. Not all effects of modernization, whether the process is initiated from within or from without, can be viewed as the modernized results of such a process. An instance at hand is the cargo-cults of New Guinea which Firth has characterized as a mere delusion and fantasy (13). The introduction of modern goods and system of transportation initiated among natives an adjustive reaction which was not based on reality-orientation, as evidenced by the belief that their ancestors would soon return in ships and aeroplanes laden with goods (14). Though the rise of the cult was the effect of modern Western rule, and though the objects and goals desired were modern, it can hardly be said that the cult movement was a modernization of the traditional religion. The aspects of the traditional outlook which provided the basis for the cults were not concerned with modernization in the sense we understand it.

Having stated some preliminary observations on the nature of

(11) From Asian history the only country we can think of in which modernization and large scale Westernization went hand in hand is the Philippines. It is the only Asian country profoundly and consistently influenced by Western culture for the last four centuries. See John L. PHELAN, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1959).

(12) An instance where modernization was wellnigh impossible was the religion of the Toradjas in Central Celebes, Indonesia. See N. ADRIANI, *The Effect of Western Rule on Animistic Heathenism*, in *Verzamelde Geschriften*, III (Haarlem, De Erven F. Bohn, 1932).

(13) Raymond FIRTH, *Elements of Social Organization* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 112-113.

(14) There is a host of literature on the subject. Among those dealing with the interpretation of such movements the following may be noted: Judy INGLIS, Cargo-Cults: The Problem of Explanation, *Oceania*, XXVII (1957),149-263, and W. E. H. STANNER, On the Interpretation of Cargo Cults, *Oceania*, XXIX (1958), 1-25.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

modernization it is by now clear what shall be understood under the term modernization. This paper shall concentrate on the relationship between religion and modernization in Southeast Asia centering around scientific and economic development. Some of the problems posed by Max Weber shall be discussed (15). We may start with enquiring whether religion encourages or hinders modernization. Three possibilities can be suggested, (*1*) that it hinders modernization, (*2*) that it encourages modernization, and (*3*) that it is neutral. The data derived from the Southeast Asian setting in particular and the Asian one in general point to the fact that it is impossible to sustain any generalization after concretely analysing cases of each specific religion such as Islam and Buddhism. In the case of the great world religions such as Islam, Christianity and Buddhism in Southeast Asia we may suggest that in some places they are neutral, in some places they encourage but nowhere do they hinder modernization and economic development. The reason why it has sometimes been suggested that religion hinders economic development is to a great extent due to the following factors:

(*a*) That the observer is not familiar with the religion concerned, its teaching and doctrinal structure as conceived by the participants.

(*b*) That the observer is not aware of the influence of other factors extraneous to the religion concerned, sometimes in conflict with it, but responsible for the phenomena impeding modernization.

(*c*) That the observer is not sufficiently aware of the dynamics of social and cultural interaction when it comes to the interaction between religion and its cultural and social setting.

(*d*) That the observer draws his conclusion from a limited amount of data.

There is one instance at hand to illustrate the influence of those factors on a particular conclusion. It has been suggested by some that Islam in Malaysia impedes the economic development of the Malays through its emphasis on what Weber calls otherworldly asceticism. Though the portrayal of condition may be correct, the conclusion is not. It has been stressed that Malay religious teachers often point to the future life as the abode of ultimate happiness for the faithful while this world is ephemeral and transient. It is argued that this inhibited the Malay Muslims from vigorous economic action in

(15) Elsewhere I had discussed Weber's thesis on religion and the rise of capitalism with reference to Southeast Asia. See Syed Hussein ALATAS, The Weber Thesis and Southeast Asia, *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* XV (1963), 21-34; ID. Collective Representations and Economic Development, *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia*, II (1965), 104-113.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

comparison with their Chinese neighbours (16). The total population of Malaya (the largest member of the Federation of Malaysia) is approximately 6,279,00 according to the latest census (1957), of which 3,125,000 are Malays (49.8 %), 2,334,000 Chinese (37.3 %), 707,000 Indians (11.3 %) and 112,000 Others (1.8 %). The distribution in urban centres is as follows:

Malays	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
604,000 *22.6 %*	1,704,000 *63.9 %*	286,000 *10.7 %*	74,000 *2.8 %*	2,668,000 *100 %*

The occupational distribution of the ethnic or racial groups according to the 1957 Census Report is as follows:

OCCUPATION	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Professional, Technical and Related Occupations	41.0	38.1	11.0	9.9	100.0
Administrative, Executive and Managerial Occupations (excluding those in agricultural and retail trade)	17.5	62.3	12.3	8.0	100.0 *
Clerical Occupations	27.1	46.2	19.8	6.8	100.0 *
Sales and Related Occupations	15.9	66.0	16.8	1.2	100.0 *
Agricultural Occupations	62.1	24.3	12.8	0.8	100.0
Miners, Quarrymen and Related Occupations	7.8	86.0	4.9	1.3	100.0
Transport and Communication Occupations	41.7	40.3	16.0	2.0	100.0
Craftsmen, Production Process Workers and Labourers n.e.c.	23.7	55.7	19.7	1.0	100.0 *
Service, Sport, Entertainment and Recreation Occupations	39.7	33.3	12.8	14.2	100.0
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	47.2	35.7	14.4	2.6	100.0 *
Persons not working but looking for work	50.1	33.4	14.8	1.7	100.0
TOTAL Economically Active	47.3	35.7	14.5	2.6	100.0 *

* Totals do not add up to 100 % because of rounding.

(16) I am unable to trace one or two published statements made several years back, but from time to time this opinion emerges in discussions among Malaysian intellectuals.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

As apparent from the occupational distribution the Chinese community in Malaya are concentrated in manufacturing, commerce, salesmanship, craft, quarrying, mining building and construction, and in executive and managerial professions. They also concentrate in the professionnal and technical fields if we exclude the nurses, midwives and teachers included in the total figures under the census classification heading.

The Malays (17) excel in the field of agriculture, the services, and unemployment. In the services it is mainly government service with a high concentration in the police and the army. In the private sector the highest concentration is in rice cultivation (more than 1/3 of the total economically active), next comes rubber cultivation, small-holding (approximately 1/4 of the total economically active), and finally fishing (approximately 1/25 of those economically active).

In the case of the Chinese the highest concentration is in rubber cultivation (more than 1/3 of the total economically active), next comes commerce (more than 1/5 of the total economically active), then sales and related occupation (more than 1/6 of the total economically active), and finally manufacturing (approximately 1/7 of the total economically active).

Among the Chinese community the traits which Weber suggested as belonging to the modern capitalist spirit are well pronounced. Frugality and diligence are highly prized. The making of money and success in life are emphasized, accompanied by a disciplined effort, long range planning, and a rational ordering of life. Their religion and philosophy of life are very much associated with wealth.

In the case of the Malay community the above traits are lacking as far as the commercial and industrial aspects of social life are concerned. This lack was then attributed to Islam. Nothing is further from the truth for the following reasons:

(*a*) The teachings of Islam encourage diligence, frugality, discipline, a rational approach within the ends and means context, active participation in commerce and industry. Mohammed was the only one among the great founders of religion who was himself a trader. The spiritual leaders of the Islamic world such as the famous Imams and Sufis were mostly people who derived their livelihood from trade and industry. Islam was spread to Southeast Asia by traders. From the teaching, as well as the history of Islam, there are sufficient

(17) Under the term Malay is included the 41,400 aborigenes. For detailed information on the occupational census of the Malays and Chinese, see H. FELL, *1957 Populations Census of the Federation of Malaya* (report n° 14), Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, 1960.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sources of inspiration and directives for a vigorous entrepreneuring life. There is also the doctrine of the calling, in a sense. A man who succeeds to acquire wealth through honest and diligent effort is favoured by God (18).

(*b*) The South Indian Muslims in Malaya developed an energetic and rational approach towards business. The discipline and organisation of life centered around their business activity are obvious. They dominated the retail trade in tobacco distribution and money changing. Together with the Chinese they participated significantly in the bookselling, the restaurant and the grocery businesses. The South Indian Muslims belong to the same religion, the same school of thought (mazhab Shafei) and the same mystical orders as the Malays. If Islam inhibits rational economic action, there is no reason why the South Indian Muslims in Malaya should be otherwise than are the Malays. Similarly we can suggest the same implication concerning the Syrian Muslim businessmen, the Bohra Ismailis of Bombay, and the rest of the Muslim business world (19).

(*c*) A section of the Minangkabau, Bugis and Achehnese Muslims of Indonesia has developed a different economic ethos and activity than the Malays. The traits of modern economic striving are present among them. They belonged to the same cultural background, religion and feudal structure, but yet developed a different economic ethic. Religion (Islam) cannot be the cause why one is not the same as others.

(*d*) Large sections of Southeast Asian societies whose religion is not Islam, exhibited the same traits as the Malays do towards modern economic action. They share a common system of values clearly expressed in their hierarchical evaluation of occupations. This common pattern of occupational grading is shared by many countries in Asia and Southeast Asia with different religious backgrounds. An instance from Ceylon, the following may be noted:

(i) Wage earning and entrepreneurial activity, except cultivation,

(18) In this connection, Weber's writings on Islam are, on the whole, absolutely untrustworthy. So are many of his remarks on Buddhism. He misses even the elementary knowledge of the religion and its historical facts. There is hardly a more disfigured picture of Islam than that depicted by Weber. See, for instance, Max WEBER, *The Sociology of Religion*, tr. R. Fischoff (Boston, Beacon Press, 1964).

(19) A quotation from an authority may be helpful here. "Islamic law favours every practical activity, and holds in great esteem agriculture, commerce, and every kind of work; it censures all thoses who burden others with their maintenance, requires every man to keep himself by the produce of his own labour, and does not despise any sort of work whereby man may make himself independent of others". D. De SANTILLANA, Law and Society, *in* T. ARNOLD *and* A. GUILLAME, *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 289.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in private business is conceived as grossly inferior in status to an equivalent occupation in government establishments.
(ii) Work or productivity as such does not have normative significance. Thus idleness and unproductive work or activity lack negative moral qualification.
(iii) Non-agricultural manual employment, even when not vocational, is generally regarded as degrading.
(iv) Consumption rather than investment direct thrift and savings.
(v) Wealth in land is considered more honourable and secure than capital investment (20).

It is this value system, a hangover from the feudal past and consolidated by colonial influence, that forms the greatest obstacle to modernization in contemporary Southeast Asia. Other factors are to my mind less determining. The problem however remains as far as religion and modernization is concerned. What is the role of religion in sustaining or changing this value system? In the past the great religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam had become part of the feudal or premodern fabrics of social life. They had accommodated to themselves different economic ethics, and different outlooks towards science and technology. When there is a change towards modernization, to what extent shall their influence be decisive in support of it? To answer this question we shall have to descend to a more concrete and microanalytic level of analysis for ultimately the processes of modernization operate along those lines.

It has been stressed by Weber that Chinese magical-animism with the vested interest of its practitioners completely prevented the advent of indigenous modern enterprises in communication and industry (21). "In general one may say that every sort of rationalization of the archaic empirical knowledge and craft in China has woven towards a magic image of the world" (22). Medicine and pharmacology were rationalized in an animistic direction. Astrology were connected with archaic meteorology. Forms of mountains, heights, rocks, plains, trees, grass, and waters have been considered

(20) Bryce RYAN, Social Values and Social Change in Ceylon, *in* W. J. CAHNMAN *and* Alvin BOSKOFF, *Sociology and History* (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1964). As the author noted, the above values characterizing the Sinhalese status-achievement-work ethos has no support in religion comparable to the Protestant support of Capitalism. The support comes from the cultural and institutional background rather than Buddhism. Buddhism does not hinder the emergence of modern capitalist values, though it does not suggest them.

(21) MAX WEBER, *The Religion of China*, translated and edited by H. GERTH (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1951) ,p. 199.

(22) *Ibid.* p. 196.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

geomantically significant such that "a single piece of rock by its form could protect whole areas against the attacks of evil demons" (23). Death, burial, construction works, and other items required geomantic control. A new funeral place might disturb all the spirits of the tombs and cause terrible misfortunes. The above approach towards existence prevented the objectification of nature, the pre-condition for the development of technology.

Family piety based on animism was the strongest influence on Chinese conduct. It facilitated and controlled the strong cohesion of the sib associations. Weber also noted the absence, in the Confucian ethic, of the tension between nature and deity, ethical demand and human shortcoming, consciousness of sin and need for salvation, action on earth and compensation in the beyond, religious duty and the social reality. There was hence, "no leverage for influencing conduct through inner forces freed of tradition and convention" (24).

The Puritan ethic was in contrast to the Confucian. It objectified man's duties as a creature of God. The religious duty towards the hidden and supra-mundane God made the Puritan appraise human relations, including the nearest in life, as mere means and expression of a mentality reaching beyond the concrete environment. Its ethic was universal and not particularistic. It was committed to a sacred cause or idea, while the Confucian was not. Stressing his point, Weber said, "For the economic mentality, the personalist principle was undoubtedly as great a barrier to impersonal matter of factness. It tended to tie the individual ever anew to his sib members and to bind him to the manner of the sib, in any case to 'persons' instead of functional tasks ('enterprises')" (25). The barrier to the rational economic mentality was intimately connected with Chinese religion. It was an obstacle maintained by the ruling and educated class. Protestantism and the ethical religions shattered the fetters of the sib. It established a community of faith rather than blood. "From the economic viewpoint it meant basing business confidence upon the ethical qualities of the individual proven in his impersonal, vocational work" (26).

We need not take issue with Weber on his description of Chinese religion. But we may challenge his assessment of Chinese religion and philosophy as an impediment to the rise of modern capitalism. Weber had definitely exaggerated the significance of religion while he played down the significance of other factors. This can be shown

(23) WEBER, *op cit.* p. 198.
(24) *Ibid.* p. 236.
(25) *Ibid.* pp. 236-237.
(26) *Ibid.* p. 237.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with the instances from Malaysia. Given a different historical, sociological and economic background, the same Chinese religion and values, not only did not hamper the rise of the modern capitalist spirit, but it positively promoted it. We have shown from our first table that the Chinese excel in those areas of action requiring functional and rational qualifications, in the entrepreneurial and managerial fields, in the commercial and industrial sectors, and in the modern professions. The influence of religion and culture is channelled through the following:

(*a*) Money and the idea of money dominate the religious practices of the Chinese more than the other communities in Malaysia. A considerable amount of money is burnt annually in the form of paper money imported from China. Singapore alone spends some millions of dollars (Malaysian) a year. Paper money is allegedly remitted to the dead by burning it. Paper money is used as offerings in temples. Devotion to the dead ancestor, a very important duty, involved the idea of money. This acts as a strong incentive to possess money.

(*b*) The obligation to honour the dead ancestors in this world by raising one's status here requires wealth and good deeds. With wealth it is possible to build a temple and reserve a family graveyard.

(*c*) Impressive public and private events such as the celebration of the New Year, weddings and funerals, and the commemoration of the dead are strongly associated with wealth and money.

(*d*) Many influential taboos and symbols are associated with wealth and good luck. It is considered undesirable to sweep the house on the first day of Chinese New Year as this may have the effect of driving away prosperity. Golden colour is much desired; a Chinese orange symbolizes wealth; carp symbolizes profit and surplus; the New Year's cake (*nien koh*) symbolizes success and increase in status.

There are numerous other instances in Chinese religious life wherein wealth and prosperity figure prominently. The area of religious life covers the worship of gods who are expected to bestow some return favours, the worship of natural forces, belief in the retribution of good and evil, in occult practices and in fortune-telling. The predominance of the ideas of wealth, honour, status, and good-health in the motivational structure of Chinese religions intensify the need for achievement in those areas. Possessing a strong motivational drive for wealth, honour, status, good health, the ability to express piety and devotion for the family and ancestors, are certainly the decisive cultural factors capable of releasing a vigorous economic action. Given the proper social and economic backgrounds, they

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

become a significant moving factor, no matter how irrational their ultimate philosophical and metaphysical anchorage seems to us.

Judging from the experience of the Chinese in Malaya, whose religion and traditional values were derived from the mainland of China, it is clear that Weber's generalization on the negative influence of Chinese religion and values on capitalist action and entrepreneurial activity, cannot be defended. Given a different setting the same religion and values, however incongruent they may be in form and spirit, with natural science and its fundamental attitudes, can be a great contributing factor in the emergence and development of the modern capitalist spirit and the process of modernization that goes with it.

From the history of the Chinese in Malaysia, showing their active participation in the spread of modern capitalism in this part of the world, which is also the integral part of modernization in this area, we may deduce the following conclusion: we have to classify types of magical-animism into those favourable to modernization and those inhibitive towards modernization, in addition to those which are neutral. Many interested scholars, in their enthusiasm for Weber's thesis, have focussed their attention primarily on the prophetic religions or the rationalistic reformist religions of Asia, without paying much heed to Asian folk religions. This has led to an over-simplification of issues, in some instances.

The suggestion that Chinese religion has contributed positively to modernization and economic development in Malaysia, despite its magical-animistic tendency which is diametrically opposed to the rational and empirical outlook of science, would compel us to follow a further line of inquiry. Why is it that the Malays, with a religion by far much more in harmony with the precepts of the natural sciences and the values of economic development lag far behind the Chinese in both areas, while the Chinese succeeded to achieve a tremendous amount of support from their religion which had not been a driving force for the pursuit of science and modernization in their own homeland? The answers are to be sought in the historical and sociological backgrounds of the two communities respectively. There were different factors operating. They formed the significant causative factors belonging to different types. The first to note is the change of the political and social environment as experienced by the Chinese immigrants and their immediate descendants. The second is the fact of their being immigrants having to struggle for survival under conditions of hardship. The third is that within the new environment the Chinese religion and tradition became a positive

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

force in favour of modernization and economic development. The fourth is that Malaysia itself offered ample scope for Chinese labour and entrepreneurship. This is very clear particularly from the latter part of the XIXth century to the subsequent decades.

The political and social environment created by the British in Singapore, Malacca and Penang, with their emphasis on free trade, the rule of law, and orderly administration, had given the necessary peace and security to enable the process of modernization and economic development to take place without hindrances. A rather significant effect of this development is the change in the status system. In the traditional Chinese society the intellectuals, educated government officials and teachers ranked highest in the occupational status hierarchy. The businessmen were below them and the landed gentry. In Malaysia, however, the businessmen, the successful entrepreneur, rank highest. After their death the possibility of deification is there provided they merited the honour. The most apparent deification was that of Sheng Ming (1822-1862), the Chinese leader of Sungei Ujong. He was a good and successful manager of business as well as a settler of disputes. He became an apprentice at the age of 15 under a general merchant in China for 14 years after which he migrated to Malaya. After his murder in 1862, a deification cult developed around him. In 1882, his friend and blood brother Yap Ah Loy, another well known Chinese pioneer and miner of Kuala Lumpur, erected a temple, in his honour, the Hsien Szu Shih Yeh, in Kuala Lumpur which has since become a famous centre of worship. Yap Ah Loy himself was eventually deified (27). They become the patrons of tin miners all over Malaya. Yap Ah Loy was a great influence in establishing peace and order in Kuala Lumpur, in building commerce and industry, roads, hospitals, schools and temples.

The deification of Yap Ah Loy, the tin miner and successful businessman, and his blood brother Cheng Ming Li, also a successful businessman, is the religious sanction for the new status system which exerts a considerable influence on the motivation of subsequent generations. The historical, sociological, economic and political conditions in Malaysia did not restrain the growth of modernization and capitalist development among the Chinese community. It was the reverse conditions that checked the rise of modern capitalism in

(27) This temple now includes the deification of 3 pioneering leaders of Chinese settlers, Sheng Ming Li, Chung Lai and Yap Ah Loy himself. On this subject see S. M. MIDDLEBROOKE, Yap Ah Loy, *Journal Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, XXIV (1951) 3-100; and Wan Ming SUING, *Yap Ah Loy and Hsien Szu Shih Yeh Miao* (Malaya in History), *Malayan Historical Society*, IX (1965), nos. 1, 2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

China. The geography of the country did not encourage land or maritime trade, natural harbours being few, especially in the north. There were few trading neighbours within easy reach to encourage commercial enterprise to give rise to a class of adventurous seafarers (28). Mountains and deserts discouraged travels, and trade routes were few and difficult. The land did not produce the surplus which could expand trade. There was no stimulation in the form of demand for luxuries in the mass of the frugal population. Incessant toil required by subsistence crops engaged most of the attention. On the social side the duty of sons to stay at home for the support of old parents and grandparents prevented mobility. Money was rarely needed by the bulk of the population, despite the fact that the earliest coins and the first bank-note were known to have been used in China (29).

From the government side there was no leadership in the direction of economic development. Its taxes and restraint on free export trade hampered the growth of entrepreneurship of the kind which was so important in Britain's industrialization. Thus the lack of stimuli from foreign trade, new technology, and government encouragement, together with the social system thwarted the development of capitalism and modernization (30). There are numerous other factors which can be suggested but suffice it to say that they fall within the domain of the non-religious. They are such factors that obstructed the rise of modern capitalism in China. The absence of such restraining factors in Malaysia from the XIXth century and thereafter provided the Chinese immigrants with the opportunities they did not have at home. In the beginning there were difficulties here and there but with the decline of power of the Malay sultanates and the accompanying substitution by British influence and eventually rule, the proper political context was created. There was however no vigorous or extensive capitalist action among the Malays. We shall now explain why such a phenomenon did not occur. There were at least four main reasons, the most significant of which was the despotic nature of Malay rule, the other three being the small size of

(28) The Emperor Yong Lu had discouraged his subjects from pursuing trade as a profession. His edict of 30 July 1402 A.D. prohibited private trade overseas. See Wang GANGWU, The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca, 1403-1405, *in* J. BASTIN and R. ROOLVINK, *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 100.

(29) A. Hingston QUIGGIN, *A Survey of Primitive Money* (London, Methuen, 1949). See pp. 200, 248. Authentic bank-notes in paper were mentioned in the time of Emperor Hsien Tsung (c. A.D. 800).

(30) For a comprehensive and detailed summary of the impedements to capitalism and modernization, see J.K. FAIRBANK, E. O. REISCHAUER, A. M. CRAIG, *East Asia, the Modern Transformation* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 88-116.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the country and population, the geographical barriers, and the social values.

Previous to the latter part of the XIXth century, things had remained the same among the Malays for successive centuries. Consequently observations made in the early XIXth century could very well apply to centuries before that. There was extremely little technological changes or innovations, or even assimilation of the kind that created significant social changes. The cannon and the musket were introduced to Malaysia and Southeast Asia from outside but these had no revolutionary effect in the sense that the stirrup had in Western Europe (31). Before 1874, much of mainland Malaya (West Malaysia) was not directly affected by changes introduced from outside with the exception of Penang, Malacca and Singapore. It was in this unaffected area, particularly in the east-coast of Malaya, that observations on the conditions of life in the feudal Malay society were made by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, the first modern Malay Muslim with a reformist tendency. He was born in Malacca in 1796 and died in Mecca in 1854 while on pilgrimage. In 1838 he was sent to Kelantan from Singapore to deliver some letters to the rajas of Kelantan and the Chinese headman there. The rajas were engaged in a succession of wars with each other. His record of this journey was however completed in 1852 (32). In 1843 he completed his memoir which was first printed in 1849 (33). He had worked as a secretary and research assistant to Raffles, the founder of Singapore. His case is interesting because it is the first one known in this area of a local citizen consciously sensing the problem of modernization and attempting to analyse the backwardness of his own community.

There were three main lines of thought followed by Abdullah. These were (*1*) that traditional Malay society was bogged down by vice and oppression condemned by Islam; (*2*) that British rules was just and progressive; and (*3*) that the Malays should abandon their traditional shackles and the vices of their ruling class, that they hold fast to their religion, and adopt the knowledge and virtues of the British. It is clear that in his rejection of certain elements in Malay life and in his adoption of certain elements from modern British life as he saw them, he employed Islamic values as his criteria for selection. Here is then a clear instance of convergence between Islam and modernization. What Abdullah recommended was not Angli-

(31) See L. WHITE, *Technology and Social Change* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962).

(32) ABDULLAH bin Adbul Kadir MUNSHI, *Kesah Pelayaran Abdullah* (Singapore, Malaya Publishing House, 1961).

(33) ABDULLAH MUNSHI, *Hikayat Abdullah* (Singapore, Malaya Publishing House, 1949).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

cization of the Malays, but certain values and science pertaining to the phenomenon of modernization.

During his journey to Kelantan in 1838, he was appalled at the degraded condition of the Malays in Trengganu, Pahang and Kelantan. These states were not reduced to destitution by plunder or natural catastrophes but by the rapaciousness of their ruling houses. How did it happen? Abdullah described the mechanism. Whenever a person accumulated wealth it attracted the attention of the ruler and his henchmen. The wealth would be seized by direct or indirect means. This state of affair stifled the growth of any incentive to acquire more than was necessary. There was continuous terror. The subjects lived in a state of fear. There were several prohibitions impressing upon the people to remain inferior. They were not allowed to use an umbrella in the royal village, they were not allowed to use shoes and yellow dresses (34). Then there was the frequent warfare between the rulers and their rivals. Their subjects were compelled to do the fighting and at the same time to feed themselves. The warfare which Abdullah witnessed was a tiring and drawn out one of which neither people from each side was enthusiastic. It was a conflict imposed upon them by their rulers. Being a small place, a family could find its members present in the different localities having to support opposing factions. Hence the low morale. Those involved tried their best to conceal themselves, in dug out trenches. Four or five shots were fired a day. Though the casualty was low, the effect on trade and farming was tremendous.

In addition to such warfare and royal oppression, there was the ravage on property and freedom caused by a powerful class of parasites, the friends and bondsmen *(hamba raja)* of the ruler. Many of these bondsmen came from the criminal class. If a person was guilty of a serious crime, one way to avoid punishment was to run to the ruler and declared himself as his slave. Thereafter no one dared to touch him. There were, on the whole, two classes of slaves amongst the Malays, the ordinary slaves *(abdi)* and the debtor-slaves *(orang berhutang)* (35). The institution of slavery was greatly abused by the ruling class.

Having considered the political situation in the Malay states and its effect on economic action and social progress, it may be asked why there was no resistence among the population to overthrow the ancient regime. Three factors came into play here. The country

(34) *Ibid.* pp. 23-25.

(35) On this see AMINUDDIN bin BAKI, The Institution of Debt Slavery in Perak, *Peninjau Sejarah* [Kuala Lumpur], I (1966), 1-11

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was divided into several small states, each with a small population, divided by rivers and jungles which did not make communication easy. Control by the ruling classes was not difficult as far as their direct subjects were concerned. But these same factors encouraged anarchy among the chiefs and rulers. A strong central authority was difficult to establish. Nevertheless the contenders in the game of power were able to enforce efficient control in their respective areas. One of the states, Perak, the second biggest in West Malaysia (Malaya) has an area of 7,980 sq. miles. In 1879 its Malay population was estimated at 56,632, of which 3,050 were slaves. There were at least 28 chiefs, minor chiefs and rajas exercising effective control on the daily life of their subjects. We can safely consider that each one would have at least 100 loyal supporters, both family members and hirelings. The 28 persons with their 2,800 supporters could easily enforce control on the daily life of 56,632 people without leaders to resist and impeded by geographical barriers. Moreover out of the total Malay population only a section of them were adult males. Each chief with their 100 supporters could very well control effectively an average area of 275 sq. miles, most of which was uninhabited (36).

Side by side with the above factors, there was the value system of traditional Malay society which condemned rebellion and stressed the attitude of absolute loyalty, no matter what the ruler was, an autocrat, a tyrant, or a benevolent monarch (37). Uprisings and peasant rebellions which had dotted the history of Europe during successive centuries were unknown to have occurred in Malay history, before the XXth century, though known to have happened quite frequently in the history of Islam.

Considering the factors which had been cited to explain the stagnation of Malay society prior to the expansion of British rule, it is apparent that Islam had not been the cause of that stagnation even if we take the interpretation of Islam current in those periods. Discrepancies between Islam and magical-animism, between Islam and gambling of which the Malays were very fond, between Islam and opium smoking, between Islam and forced marriages or concubinage practised by the rulers, between Islam and the avoidance of learning deplored by Abdullah to which he attributed the oppression of the rulers, and numerous other instances, are too obvious to require fur-

(36) The figures of the number of chiefs and population were derived from AMINUDDIN bin BAKI, *op. cit.*

(37) On this see the classical Malay historical text, *Sejarah Melayu*, written probably not earlier then the XVIth century by an anonymous author. See also *Hikayat Hang Tuah*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ther proofs. With the exception of ritual and the law of inheritance, the other main values and teachings of Islam had been violated, particularly those with reference to the acquisition of knowledge and wealth, order and justice in society.

It seems most fitting to end our discourse on traditional Malay society with the summary given by Abdullah when he compared conditions in the British administrated territories of Singapore, Penang and Malacca with those in the Malay states. In the Malay states, he pointed out, there was no security of life and property; there was no trust and justice; there was a large number of royal slaves who inflicted hardship on the people; there were too many indolent people passing their time, day and night, without being productive; there was no appreciation from the rulers for diligence, hardwork, honest living, and the acquisition of wealth; there was forced labour without remuneration; there was the bad habit of celebrating upper class weddings and circumcisions with the accompaniments of opium smoking, gambling and cock-fighting leading to economic ruin; there was no serious attitude towards religion (38). In the British territories he suggested that the opposite prevailed.

Most of what Abdullah observed were true of other regions outside Malaysia such as Sumatra. The general conditions were the same. It was these conditions that hindered the emergence of individualism, science and technology, the capitalist ethic and modernization. On the whole the Malay states did not modernize out of their own accord unlike Turkey and Japan. Modernization was brought about by the British. The first area to be modernized was not science or technology, but administration. When this modernization took place the Chinese immigrants were the first to exploit the new situation. While the Malays remained tied to their traditional moorings, the Chinese immigrants had left behind their traditional, social and political fetters. They were not subjected to the authority of an oppressive feudal system blocking modernization and the acquisition of wealth. They lived and toiled under British protection without any hindrance from their own upper classes as was their experience in China.

It is clear that the historical, cultural, sociological and political factors had been much more decisive in their influence on modernization and modern economic action among both the Chinese and Malay communities, than their religious backgrounds. Just as the Chinese were restrained by those categories of factors in their tradi-

(38) ABDULLAH, *op. cit.* pp. 108-109.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tional homeland, so were the Malays in the pre-modern Malaysia. While the Chinese immigrants accomplished a complete political administrative severance from their own feudal past, the Malays did not. Hence this entanglement with the feudal past in the XIXth and early XXth centuries prevented the Malays from modernizing and economically developing at a comparatively similar rate as the Chinese. The first group of Malays to benefit from British rules economically were the former feudal masters. In many respects their position had been strengthened, their prestige and influence considerably increased. What the Malay masses gained from British rule was personal liberty and the rule of law, not, however, wealth and capitalist successes. In many respects subsequent effects of British rule made their condition worse. In the occupational ratio there had been a serious deterioration in their condition. This was perceived by a pioneer Malay Islamic reformist, Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi (1862-?) who was acutely conscious of the economic and occupational decline of the Malays (39).

Returning to our central theme, the relation between religion and modernization, we have, so far, established the fact that neither magical-animism (the Chinese type) nor Islam may be considered as obstacles to modernization, given the proper political, sociological and historical conditions. On the other hand, neither the Islamic nor the Chinese religious tradition had given birth to the phenomenon of modernization independently of Western influence. If that is the case what is then left of their function? It appears that with or without them the modernization of Southeast Asian society would continue. It seems to me that their only function is to prepare the emotional and intellectual grounds for the assimilation, spread and development of modernization particularly in the value sphere. Religion can strengthen and sanctify the values on which modernization depends, the more so if there is a convergent between its values and those of modernization. The fact that it can only do this, at this point of Southeast Asian history, does not minimize its significance, for the goals and meanings of life to which the modernization process is directed and with which it is ultimately interwoven, require a religious foundation if the continuity and integration with the Southeast Asian tradition is desired. No doubt there will be a need to adjust and reform the religious traditions but the forms that will

(39) Syed Sheikh AL-HADI bin AHMAD, *Menuntut Ketinggian Akan Anak2 Negeri* (Striving for the progress of the indigenous people), *Al-Imam*, II (1907), n° 1; (Malay newspaper in Arabic script).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

emerge depend on the doctrinal structure of the religion concerned as well as the conditions which necessitate the reform and adjustment.

The study of religion and modernization in Southeast Asia will have to analyse the interplay between the doctrinal structure and the external conditions. If the doctrinal structure is too much at variance with the process and values of modernization the religious reaction will generate strains and crisis, in some cases leading to a cultural disintegration (40). In order to illustrate the kind of analysis we have in mind, let us take the instance cited by Elkin. Amongst the Koiari in the vicinity of the Kokoda Trail in Papua, there prevailed a homicidal cult which required a man to wear a hornbill's crest, the homicidal emblem, the sign of having killed a human being, as a condition for marriage. The cult was prohibited by government and, as a result thereof, there was no killing in the patrolled area, few willing brides, a declining birthrate and a dwindling population. The cult was an integral part of the culture and its prohibition took some of the excitement and vim out of life, the stalking and killing, and the consequent drum-beating and dancing before admiring eyes.

In the case of head-hunting in Western Papua the prohibition had a different effect. The practice had been a recent addition to the cultural heritage coming to Dutch New Guinea. It usually occurred as a reprisal raid or suspected sorcery. The whole behaviour complex of head-hunting was associated with magical, aesthetic and technological culture elements. It involved some degree of organization. But head-hunting was not a social or ceremonial necessity. Neither tribal prestige nor marriage depended on it. "Therefore, its prohibition did not destroy the desire for life, nor threaten any tribal principle of prestige, nor undermine the social structure. Indeed it removed a fear and made settled life possible" (41).

The study of religion and modernization will require that the distinction be made between the integral and essential parts of the doctrinal structure and those that are secondary and changeable. Though this distinction has been widely applied in the study of culture, it has not won general recognition in the study of religion.

(40) The term disintegration is here used in the sense suggested by Ralph Linton. Integration is described by Linton as "the progressive development of more and more perfect adjustements between the various elements which compose the total culture". Disintegration is the reverse process. As it is with such key concepts in the social sciences, the term is best clarified by concrete instances, and this was done by Linton. See his *Study of Man* (New York, Appetlon-Century, 1936), pp. 347-366.

(41) A. P. ELKIN, Man and His Cultural Heritage, *Oceania*, XX (1949-1950), pp. 16-17.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

As a result of that a very significant perspective has been shelved into the background. It is a perspective which can help us in predicting the course of modernization in a given religious community. Knowing the nature of the integral elements in the doctrinal structure will assists us in assessing the resistance to, or acceptance of modernization. Here I should like to discuss a phenomenon the relevance of which to our theme will become apparent in no time. The phenomenon has been studied by Ames. Ames is one of the first to study the structure of the synthesis between Buddhism, magical-animism and other elements of Sinhalese culture. In this synthesis he shows that magical-animism, the cult of the spirits and exorcism, was not integrated in the sense of the total but purely in the instrumental sense towards attaining the genuine Buddhist values conceived to be superior, ultimate and essentially distinct from magic and animism (42). Though in practice the two are intermeshed, in theory they are distinct. This distinction is clearly maintained in Sinhalese theory. "Buddhism is concerned with the fate of the soul and such concepts as *karma*, rebirth, merit and demerit, spiritual development through systematic meditation, and salvation or nirvana. The magic healing rituals, in which various spirits are propitiated or exorcised, have nothing to do with this realm of the other wordly. They cannot alter a person's karma, influence his rebirth chances, gain merit for him, or help him attain salvation. Magic rituals are completely this wordly" (43). It is a science entirely concerned with misfortunes. Breaking its interdiction is no sin but only foolishness since it invites the anger of the spirits. Veneration is not a part of spirit propitiation and hence it lacks sacredness. It belongs to the world of the profane.

An illustration furnished by Ames concerned a young novice of the Buddhist monkhood who suffered a mental disturbance of psychosexual origin. Troubled by the disturbance, he reverted to his lay status so as to avert embarassment. He then returned to his native village and sought the help of a shaman who cured him of his troubles, enabling him to return to his sacred vocation. The traditional diagnosis of his case suggested the machination of a female goblin as the source of his troubles (44). Magical animism as illustrated by

(42) For his elaborate and detailed presentation, see Michael M. Ames, Magical-Animism and Buddhism : A structural analysis of the Sinhalese religious system, *in* L. B. Harper, Aspects of Religion in South Asia, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXIII (1964), 21-52.

(43) Michael M. Ames, Buddha and the Dancing Goblin: A theory of magic and religion, *American Anthropologist*, LXVI (1964), p. 77.

(44) *Ibid.* pp. 78-79.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this case serves the spiritual aspiration of Buddhism by bringing the aspirant monk back into line to perform his meditation and other spiritual duties. My own research in the field of Malay magic, shamanism, and traditional therapy supports Ames' conclusion as regards the profanity and instrumentality of magic and spirit cults among Malay Muslims.

However, coming back to our central theme, the role of religion in creating the outlook to support the forces for modernization, given the necessary social and economic conditions generated by modern civilization, whatever be their modes of transmission from the West, we may emphasize the fact that those elements of Buddhism and Islam which appear to be magical and irrational are in reality that part of the synthesis which can be replaced by science and rationality provided that such a replacement is conceived to be an improvement of the previous ones. We should also emphasize the point that the synthesis is not only composed of religion and magic but also of science and rationality. In the pre-modern traditional outlook rational and empirical approach towards the solution of human sufferings and mishaps has not been absent. But it must be stressed however that this synthesis is not of a static nature. It develops its own conflict and tension and, in this conflict and tension, the receding influence is magical animism, at least that part which competes with science and technology. In this conflict within the traditional synthesis Islam and science are getting the upper hand. As illustrations I shall use some materials of my research, which is still on, concerning the *pawangs* and *bomohs* of Malay society (diviners, healers and sorcerers of Malay society).

The most interesting illustration is the case of Pak Nik Abdul Rahman bin Nik Dir, the Royal Bomoh of the Court of Kelantan, Malaysia. Pak Nik, as he is called in Kelantan, is an outstanding bomoh, a thinker of the group. He practises healing (usually psychological cases), prepares charms, magical spells for traditional sports and gamblings, drives away spirits from dwellings, officiates in the *puja pantai* ceremony, banned not long ago by the Pan Malayan Islamic Party Government of the Kelantan state. The *puja pantai* ceremony was held annually at the shore, to placate spirits of the sea with the sacrifice of a buffalo. In addition to this he is a leading performer of the *wayang kulit*, the Malay-Indonesian shadow play. The themes and stories of this play are derived from Hindu philosophy and mythology. He is sufficiently well versed in Islamic religion. His *jampi* (spell and charm) is derived both from the Quran and traditional Malay animistic and Hinduistic sources.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The structure of synthesis of all these different components resembles that described by Ames of Buddhism and Sinhalese magical animism with the only difference that in the Islamic-Malay magical animism synthesis the idea of God, the Creator and the Living Source of all existence occupies the dominant position. The rest occupies a secondary and instrumental position. As in Sinhalese Buddhism, Malay magical animism belongs to the world of the profane. Within this synthesis in the person of Pak Nik there is no tension and conflict because nothing comes into conflict with Islam. The conflict comes in the realm of ethical values as when, for instance, a client asked him to charm his wife to hate him so that she would desire a divorce to enable him to marry another suitor. In such an instance he often refused to prepare the charm but satisfied the client by providing him with something else which would not create the desired effect without his client knowing it. In this situation the Islamic value got the upper hand for it is opprobious to Islam to create troubles and unnecessary difficulties to other people, in this case the wife who happened to have a number of children (45).

In his own occupation he is full of dedication and perseverance. There is a marked restlessness and desire for modernization. He believes in the efficiency of modern medicine which he considers as supplementary to traditional magical animistic healing and admits its superiority in certain fields. He himself goes to a doctor and at one time he spent quite a bit of money trying to cure his asthmatic wife. He has a grandson of which he is very proud. It is his ambition that the child (a teen-ager) should go for higher learning in the university. With reference to religion and modernization, the area which is most affected and vulnerable to the onslaught of modern science and rationalism is the magical animistic component of the belief synthesis of Pak Nik Abdul Rahman. He is himself gradually yielding to it. His religion, Islam, remains silent and is indifferent to the fate of his magical animism. On the contrary, his home town had been the scene of modernist religious reform movements. Many of his relatives were involved and some of them had taken a leading role. In certain instances the attack on magical animism came from

(45) Regarding the conflict between Islam and magical animism, the following observation was made by a British administrator G. MAXWELL, *In Malay Forests* (London, Blackwood, 1905): "The *pawangs* are dying out. It is not that civilization of British rule exercices a direct influence upon the native belief in this respect, but that this civilization is making the inhabitant of the Peninsula more of a Muhammadan and less of a Malay. The more he learns of his religion the more he realises how impossible is the compromise that has been allowed to exist for the last four or five centuries between the pre-Muhammadan beliefs and the precepts of the prophet" [p. 305].

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Islamic quarters. Here and there, the combined influence of Islamic modernism and Western science and technology has ultimately weakened or eliminated magical animism.

It is not only in the fields of modern science and technology that this convergence of influence occurs, but also in the fields of values and individualism. The modern idea of the individual as a person worthy of respect with the inalienable rights on his life, property, and security, with his own responsibility for his action, were introduced into Southeast Asia by Islam before the coming of the Western powers (46). It is not to be denied that Hinduism and Buddhism had also introduced this idea but the total structures of the beliefs elements were different. There was no concept of a divine kinship in Islam which was accommodated by the idea of incarnation as in Hinduism and Buddhism. There was no priesthood or church in Islam. The idea of the rule of law was stressed and no individual, king or subject, should be considered as above the law. For some historical and sociological reasons, the myths related to the divine qualities of Malays rulers had on the whole been derived from magical animism and popular Hinduism. In practice, these myths are still circulating and are believed by quite a number of people. So are the bulk of taboos and magical practices. Only very few are derived from Islamic history.

These myths and taboos are of such a nature that they are negative in its effect on modernization both in the realms of science and the value premises of modernization. Let us cite an instance. In traditional Malay society the ruler was the source of almost all powers. The land belonged to him. He had the right on the labour of his subjects *(pekerjaan kerah)*. He had also the right on the absolute loyalty of his subjects. The most serious transgression is *derhaka*, disobedience, disloyalty, disrespect and desertion of the sovereign. Whatever the ruler commands must be obeyed whether it is right or wrong. This whole philosophy finds its perfect expression in the person of Hang Tuah the feudal Malay hero. He ignominuously killed his best friend who rebelled against the ruler in an unchivalrous manner. Neither ethics, nor scruples, nor intellectual achievement, nor integrity of character, nor diligence and hardwork, were

(46) See W. F. WERTHEIM, *Indonesian Society in Transition* (The Hague, van Hoeve, 1959): "Islam contributed in large measure to the humanising of numerous Asian customs" [p. 196]. "The individualising trait of Islam is the adoption of Roman law on the protection of private property and the rejection of the intermediary between God and the individual, and the denial of any autonomous community save the Islamic. Islam gave the small man a sense of individual worth" [p. 198]. In this sense it was the fermenting agent for the XXth century revolutionary process.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

regarded as necessary conditions for prestige and success in life. With such traits missing in the elites of society it would be difficult to ensure the social birth of the entrepreneurs, for any successful accumulation of wealth would become the target of a predatory ruling class. The incentive to accumulate would be suppressed, and the predatory ruling class firmly entrenched itself with the help of the myth justifying the sacred few to own and rule the territory (47). A gulf was maintained between ruler and subjects. The ruler had a divine ancestry. He possessed magical power and his command *(titah)* was law.

Without the rule of law on non magical principles, the social order conducive to development and modernization could not come into being. Individualism could not develop without the rational rule of law. Even in Japan during the Meiji Restoration the rule of law was present through the impersonalization of the emperor. This rule of law was necessary to provide the minimum security and order without which development and modernization could not have taken place (48).

In yet another area of modernization there is the convergence of influence between Islam and modernization. This is the raising of the dignity and status of labour (49). In feudal Southeast Asian society, as in many other parts of the mediaeval world, labour was considered as something without prestige value unbecoming of the elite and honourable. Around the turn of the XXth century Muslim reformers all over the world stressed the significance of labour by appealing to the Quran and the life of the Prophet. In Indonesia, the well-known leader of Serekat Islam, the first mass political party with a significant following, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, emphasized the

(47) Wertheim notes a somewhat similar observation on Java. "External trade was not much encouraged by the chiefs, who generally preferred to tax the farmers' produce to the utmost. In consequence there was no strong incentive for the peasant to increase his production. There was on the whole no question of large surpluses, although the rice surplus in the irrigated areas was usually sufficient to support a governing super-structure of Javanese princes, residing with their retinue in the *kraton* (princely court) towns", *op. cit.* p. 90.

(48) This factor, the rule of law, is certainly not the only pre-condition of modern capitalism and modernization. But nevertheless it is a pre-condition which ensures the smooth operation of other pre-conditions. On the significance of the rule of law in the birth of modern Japan, see Edwin O. REISCHAUER, Japanese Feudalism, *in* Rushton COULBORN, *Feudalism in History* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1956).

(49) It may here be helpful to refer again to SANTILLANA, Law and Society, *in* ARNOLD *and* GUILLAME, *op cit.* : "Islamic law favours every practical activity, and holds in great esteem agriculture, commerce, and every kind of work; it censures all those who burden others with their maintenance, requires every man to keep himself by the produce of his own labour, and does not despise any sort of work whereby man may keep himself independent of others" [p. 289, n. 19].

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

dignity of labour. To degrade labour is against the teaching of socialism and Islam. He appealed to the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet. Whoever does not earn his living by means of his own skill or manual labour is not the friend of God. Begging and dependence on others are condemned. Tjokroaminoto cited the instance of Caliph Ali, son-in-law and successor of Mohammed, whom he considered as a great socialist. To the great surprise of foreign visitors, Ali was one day found, in Medinah, in the garden of a Jew, watering vegetables with water brought on his shoulder from another place (50).

During my recent trip to Kelantan (August 1966) I came across an interesting publication, the only one of its kind, in a brochure entitled *The Spirit of Living*, first printed in January 1918, by the Council for the Islamic Religion and Malay Custom *(Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu)*, Kota Bahru, Kelantan, Malaya. The publication was meant for the religious schools. The author, Mohammed bin Daud Patani, exhorted his readers to labour and strive hard. He severely condemned those who were not willing to work and regarded them as outside the fold of the human community. The preface urged the need for the Malays to uplift their standard of progress so that they could compete with other nations (51). It is possible for us to cite further innumerable instances where Islamic values converge with those of modernization, but this would be a digression. Hence we shall not cite further instances. We shall assume that the point is proved.

In the case where the values of religion and modernization converge, the impeding factors towards modernization are clearly to be sought elsewhere. Should that not be the case we may then suggest, like Weber did, that the impeding factors originate in religion provided we can trace it to the doctrinal structure. Nonetheless the problem is not as simple as all that for even in cases where the values of religion are not converging with those of modernization, these values can indirectly promote modernization, or become neutralized by other values emerging from the context of action. The latter can be a theme of an interesting enquiry.

(50) H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, *Islam dan Sosialisme* (Djakarta, Bulan Bintang, 1951). (This work was written in Mataram, November, 1924.)

(51) Mohammed bin Daud Patani, *Semangat Penghidupan, Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu* (Kelantan, Kota Bahru, 1922). (In Malay Arabic script, 2nd edition).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

TABLE I - A

Economically Active Population of Federation of Malaya, 1957 by Industry and Ethnic Group (52)

INDUSTRY	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing	459,842	100,929	4,491	7,527	572,789
Agricultural products requiring substantial processing	289,477	209,493	170,026	3,009	672,005
Mining and Quarrying	10,312	39,955	6,809	1,423	58,499
Manufacturing	26,588	97,502	10,086	1,206	135,382
Building and Construction	21,830	32,589	12,302	1,413	68,134
Electricity, Gas, Water	3,850	2,985	4,176	558	11,569
Commerce	32,020	127,096	32,781	3,295	195,192
Transport, Storage and Communication	26,870	29,162	16,064	2,659	74,755
Services	127,641	109,948	48,113	34,043	319,745
TOTAL	998,430	749,659	304,848	55,133	2,108,070
Activities omitted, inadequately described	5,907	9,387	2,380	438	18,112
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	1,004,337	759,046	307,228	55,571	2,126,182
Not working but looking for work	19,392	12,917	5,728	642	38,679
TOTAL Economically Active	1,023,729	771,963	312,956	56,213	2,164,861

SOURCE : H. FELL, 1957 Population Census, Report N° 14, Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, 1960, pages 102-110.

(52) Economically active is defined as all those working for at least four months prior to the enumeration period.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

TABLE I - B

Percentage Distribution of Economically Active Population by Industry for Each Ethnic Group

INDUSTRY	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing	44.9	13.1	1.4	13.4	26.5
Agricultural Products requiring substantial processing	28.3	27.1	54.3	5.4	31.0
Mining and Quarrying	1.0	5.2	2.2	2.5	2.7
Manufacturing	2.6	12.6	3.2	2.1	6.3
Building and Construction	2.1	4.2	3.9	2.5	3.1
Electricity, Gas, Water	0.4	0.4	1.3	1.0	0.5
Commerce	3.1	16.5	10.5	5.9	9.0
Transport, Storage and Communication	2.6	3.8	5.1	4.7	3.5
Services	12.5	14.2	15.4	60.6	14.8
TOTAL	97.5	97.1	(97.4) 97.3	98.1	97.4
Activities omitted, inadequately described	0.6	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.8
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	98.1	98.3	(98.2) 98.1	98.9	98.2
Not working but looking for work	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.1	1.8
TOTAL Economically Active	100.0	100.0	100.0 *	100.0	100.0

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

TABLE I - C

Percentage Distribution of Economically Active Population by Ethnic Group for Each Industry

INDUSTRY	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing	80.3	17.6	0.8	1.3	100.0
Agricultural, Products requiring substantial processing	43.1	31.2	25.3	0.4	100.0
Mining and Quarrying	17.6	68.3	11.6	2.4	100.0
Manufacturing	19.6	72.0	7.5	0.9	100.0
Building and Conctruction	32.0	47.8	18.1	2.1	100.0
Electricity, Gas, Water	33.3	25.8	36.1	4.8	100.0
Commerce	16.4	65.1	16.8	1.7	100.0
Transport, Storage and Communication	35.9	39.0	21.5	3.6	100.0
Services	39.9	34.4	15.0	10.6	100.0 *
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	47.2	35.7	14.4	2.6	100.0 *
Not working but looking for work	50.1	33.4	14.8	1.7	100.0
TOTAL Economically Active	47.3	35.7	14.5	2.6	100.0 *

* Totals do not add up to exactly 100% because of rounding.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

TABLE II-A

Economically Active Population of Federation of Malaya 1957 by Occupation and Ethnic Group

OCCUPATION	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Professional, Technical and Related Occupations	26,934	24,989	7,222	6,528	65,673
Administrative, Executive and Managerial Occupations (excluding those in agricultural and retail trade)	4,290	15,275	3,014	1,953	24,532
Clerical Occupations	16,695	28,446	12,215	4,181	61,537
Sales and Related Occupations	28,981	120,382	30,629	2,274	182,266
Agricultural Occupations	744,788	291,047	154,091	9,672	1,199,598
Miners, Quarrymen and Related Occupations	429	4,756	272	74	5,531
Transport and Communication Occupations	27,887	26,912	10,712	1,334	66,845
Craftsmen, Production Process Workers and Labourers n.e.c.	77,708	182,975	64,686	3,199	382,568
Service, Sport, Entrertainment and Recreation Occupations	72,869	61,052	23,450	26,096	183,467
TOTAL	1,000,581	755,834	306,291	55,311	2,118,017
Work not classified by occupations	3,756	3,212	937	260	8,165
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	1,004,337	759,046	307,228	55,571	2,126,182
Persons not working but looking for work	19,392	12,917	5,728	642	38,679
TOTAL Economically Active	1,023,729	771,963	312,956	56,213	2,164,861

SOURCE : H. FELL, 1957 Population Census, Report N° 14, Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, 1960, pages 128-137.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

TABLE II-B*

Percentage Distribution of Economically Active Population by Occupation for Each Ethnic Group

OCCUPATION	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	TOTAL
Professional, Technical and Related Occupations	2.6	3.2	2.3	11.6	3.0
Administrative, Executive and Managerial Occupations (excluding those in agricultural and retail trade)	0.4	2.0	1.0	3.5	1.1
Clerical Occupations	1.6	3.7	3.9	7.4	2.8
Sales and Related Occupation	2.8	15.6	9.8	4.0	8.4
Agricultural Occupations	72.8	37.7	49.2	17.2	55.4
Miners, Quarrymen, and Related Occupations	negligible	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.3
Transport and Communication Occupations	2.7	3.5	3.4	2.4	3.1
Craftsmen, Production Process Workers and Labourers n.e.c.	7.6	23.7	20.7	5.7	15.2
Service, Sport, Entertainment and Recreation Occupations	7.1	7.9	7.5	46.4	8.5
TOTAL	(97.7) 97.6	97.9	97.9	(98.4) 98.3	97.8
Workers not classified by occupation	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4
TOTAL Gainfully Employed	(98.1) 98.0	98.3	98.2	(98.9) 98.8	98.2
Persons not working but looking for work	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.1	1.8
TOTAL Economically Active	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* I wish to acknowledge the help granted to me by the *Economic Research Centre*, University of Singapore, who assisted in the compilation of the statistical tables listed in this paper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600002083 Published online by Cambridge University Press